

# We Must Glory in the Cross



**Thrust Statement:** God's people should determine not to know anything except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

**Scripture Reading:** [1 Corinthians 2:1-2](#); [Galatians 6:11-18](#)

See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand! Those who want to make a good impression outwardly are trying to compel you to be circumcised. The only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ. Not even those who are circumcised obey the law, yet they want you to be circumcised that they may boast about your flesh. May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation. Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, even to the Israel of God. Finally, let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen ([Galatians 6:11-18](#)).<sup>[1]</sup>

Do you glory in the cross of Christ? Or do you glory in your own works? Did you receive salvation through the cross of Christ or through your own efforts? Did you receive the Spirit of God through your obedience to God's law, or did you receive the Spirit through faith? Are you a child of God through faith, or are you a child of God through law keeping? Are you glorying in the cross of Christ, or are you glorying in your own efforts? Is salvation from God? Or is salvation from you?

If you are glorying in your own efforts, you are denying justification by faith. In other words, you are in reality denying the purpose of the cross of Christ. Paul captures graphically the nature of salvation when he says,

Justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus (**Romans 3:24-26**).

The cross was an outstanding victory over Satan, death, and condemnation. As the people of God, every believer should live his/her daily life with a sensitive awareness of Christ's cross. Paul points out the significance of the cross and the blood to the Colossians: "For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross" (**Colossians 1:19-20**). Is it any wonder that Paul shudders, as it were, at glorying at anything other than the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ (**Galatians 6:14**).

## **WE MUST GLORY IN THE PERSON OF THE CROSS**

The author of Hebrews encourages the disciples of Jesus to fix their eyes on Him who is "the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart (**Hebrews 12:2-3**). "May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (**Galatians 6:14**). For just a moment, let us ease drop on a scene that took place in heaven with the twenty-four elders who fell down before the Lamb of God in praise:

And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth" (**Revelation 5:9-10**).

Not only did the twenty-four elders fall down and worship, but John tells his listeners about thousands of angels who joined in praise to the Lamb of God:

Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they sang: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!" Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!" The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped (**Revelation 5:11-14**).

There is a sense in which one can never know His Lord Jesus Christ without the cross. The penal aspect of the death of the Lord Jesus is the essence of the gospel. Peter says, "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed" (**1 Peter 2:24**). This gospel is so important that Paul reminds the Corinthians not to forget the gospel he proclaimed

to them:

Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

Paul wanted them to know that Jesus had to die, “for without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (Hebrews 9:22).

Christ’s death upon the cross was not an afterthought on the part of God. Peter on the day of Pentecost acknowledged the foreordination of this redeeming event: “This man was handed over to you by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross” (Acts 2:23). On the day of the resurrection, the women who had previously followed Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem (Luke 23:55) visited the tomb of Jesus only to be questioned by “two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning” (24:4). These two men said: “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.’ Then they remembered his words” (24:5-8).

Following a squabble between the apostles over the request of James and John for positions of honor (Mark 10:35-41), Jesus reminds them all: “the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (10:45). There was sovereignty about His death, for He chose the manner of His death and unfolded it to His disciples. He knew He was going to die. Matthew records three separate occasions (Matthew 16:21; 17:22-23; 20:17-19) in which Jesus foretold about death and resurrection on the third day. In His last Passover meal with the disciples, He explains to His disciples that the third cup (The Cup of Blessing) represented His shed blood: “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” (Matthew 26:28).

Isaiah (739 BCE), over seven hundred years before, had prophesied concerning the crucifixion of Jesus for the sins of many:

He was despised, and we esteemed him not. <sup>4</sup> Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup> But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. <sup>6</sup> We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. <sup>7</sup> He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was

led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. <sup>8</sup> By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken. <sup>9</sup> He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. <sup>10</sup> Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. <sup>11</sup> After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. <sup>12</sup> Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors (**Isaiah 53:4-12**).

This is substitutionary atonement: “the LORD makes his life a guilt offering” (**Isaiah 53:10**). No wonder Paul shouts: “May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” (**Galatians 6:14**). Do you not understand why Paul dared not boast about his salvation except in the cross of Christ? It is as Paul says, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (**Romans 3:23**). Again, Paul writes, “God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement” (**3:25**). Jesus died to become your Savior. I remind each of you that “there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men” (**1 Timothy 2:5-6**).

Once more, Paul's words are to the point: “justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus” (**Romans 3:24**). Can you boast about your works? Do you think that your works have put you in a right relationship with God? Listen again as Paul nails the coffin shut about “works righteousness”: “Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle is boasting excluded? Is boasting excluded on the principle of observing the law? No, boasting is excluded on the principle of faith. Paul emphatically states: “For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law” (**3:27-28**).

## CONCLUSION

You would never know salvation from the penalty of sin were it not for the fact that Jesus died at Calvary. Have you knelt at Calvary and said, “May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” (**Galatians 6:14**). Where do you stand? Remember that the glory of the cross is the glory of His person, His purpose, and His power. Will you look at that cross and beyond it to Christ and give your answer?

## WHEN I SURVEY THE WONDROUS CROSS

Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

Written: 1707

When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of glory died, my richest gain I count but loss, and pour contempt on all my pride. Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast, save in the death of Christ, my God; all the vain things that charm me most—I sacrifice them to His blood. See, from His head, His hands, His feet, sorrow and love flow mingled down; did e'er such love and sorrow meet, or thorns compose so rich a crown? Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were a present far too small: Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.

**Oakwood Hills Church**

**DeFuniak Springs, FL**

**Date: June 20, 1999**

**Time: 11 am**

**Occasion: Gospel Meeting**

**Oakwood Hills Church**

**DeFuniak Springs, FL**

**Date: November 19, 2000**

**Time: 11 am**

**Present: 64**

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<sup>[1]</sup> All Scripture citations are from *The New International Version*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House) 1984, unless stated otherwise.